

Parent Quick Guide

What your student heard, the facts behind it, and how to keep the conversation going

What they heard

Build your life, don't just live it. “You only live once” is the reason to make the smart choice, not the excuse for the dumb one.

“It's safe.” Says who? The only people calling vaping safe are those who use it and those who sell it. These are the same industries that once advertised “More doctors smoke Camels.”

“Vapor” is marketing. It's an aerosol. The main ingredients are approved to eat, not to inhale.

From quit aid to teen product. USB-shaped devices, candy flavors, and influencers came next. When the 2020 flavor rule covered pods but not disposables, unregulated disposables, mostly made in China, took over.

“If you have nothing to gain but everything to lose, don't flip the coin.”

The three rules

- 1 Get all the information first**, and consider the source. Are they trying to help you or profit from you?
- 2 Don't put your health in someone else's hands.** With a vape, you can't know what's inside.
- 3 Don't flip the coin** when there's nothing to gain and everything to lose. If you're already in a bad spot, look for the way out.

Be the way out

Pick a code word with your teen. If they text it, you call and “make” them come home. No questions that night. The speaker's family uses **“fine.”** And tell them they can always blame you: “My parents test me.”

The facts

5.2%

of U.S. middle and high schoolers vaped in the past 30 days. Most teens *don't* vape, and saying so helps.

FDA, 2025 NYTS

9 in 10

teens who vape use flavored products. Two-thirds use disposables. Geek Bar is the top brand.

FDA, 2025 NYTS

~2×

the risk of chronic bronchitis symptoms in teens who vape. The risk stayed elevated for those who had stopped.

McConnell et al., 2017

9 in 10

adults who smoke daily tried their first cigarette by 18. A developing brain gets hooked faster.

CDC; U.S. Surgeon General

~4% → 15%+

average THC in cannabis, mid-1990s vs. 2018. Vape cartridges often run far higher.

NIDA

5×

the odds of a psychotic disorder with daily high-potency cannabis use.

Di Forti et al., Lancet Psychiatry, 2019

Signs to notice

- Small devices that look like USB drives, highlighters, or markers, or unfamiliar chargers
- A sweet, fruity smell with no obvious source
- More thirst, dry mouth, a lingering cough
- Irritability or restlessness when they can't use (nicotine withdrawal)
- Unexplained spending, or money missing

If you find out

- **Calm down first.** Talk once you're calm, not in the moment you find it.
- **Be curious, not punishing.** Ask what it does for them: stress, fitting in, boredom, focus.
- **Treat it as addiction,** not a character flaw. Slips are normal.
- **Call their pediatrician** if they can't stop on their own.
- **Possible THC reaction?** For confusion, severe anxiety, or repeated vomiting, call Poison Control. For trouble breathing or unresponsiveness, call 911.

Five conversations

“How many kids at your school do you think vape?”

Asking about others gets honest answers.

“Who's actually telling people it's safe?”

Let them argue it out.

“If someone handed you one, what would you say?”

Rehearsed lines come out under pressure.

“Let's pick our code word.”

Then honor it, no questions that night.

“What actually helps when you're stressed?”

Healthy coping leaves less need for an escape.

Where to get help

Teens who want to quit vaping: free, anonymous texts	Text DITCHVAPE to 88709
Texts for parents of teens who vape	Text QUIT to 202-899-7550
Free quit coaching in every state	1-800-QUIT-NOW
Partnership to End Addiction: help for parents	Text CONNECT to 55753
Poison Control: vape liquid swallowed or a THC reaction	1-800-222-1222
SAMHSA National Helpline, 24/7	1-800-662-4357
988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline · Emergency	988 · 911

Sources: FDA, 2025 National Youth Tobacco Survey · McConnell R et al., Am J Respir Crit Care Med 2017;195(8):1043–49 · CDC, Youth and Tobacco Use · CDC, Outbreak of Lung Injury Associated with E-cigarette Use (EVALI) · U.S. Surgeon General, E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults (2016) · NIDA, Cannabis potency data · Di Forti M et al., Lancet Psychiatry 2019;6(5):427–36 · Truth Initiative, This is Quitting.